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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8293
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1584
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 5068
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 8666
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 6235
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 4085
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2050
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 000811

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP AND IO; PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/16/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: SOME NLD YOUTH QUIT PARTY; ETHNIC PARTY ANNOUNCES
ELECTION BOYCOTT

REF: A. RANGOON 775

[1](#)B. RANGOON 215

[1](#)C. RANGOON 611

Classified By: Pol Officer Sean O'Neill for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) Contrary to exile media reports that over 100 youth members of the NLD have resigned, our sources told us that only eight to ten members quit over disagreements with the party's Central Executive Committee. Another 30 members signed a letter protesting recent moves by the party's leadership to restructure the youth wing, but did not resign. Meanwhile, the Arakan League for Democracy has announced its intention to boycott the 2010 parliamentary elections. While the party had already decided sit out the elections, this is the first time it has publicly declared its intention to boycott. End Summary.

SOME NLD YOUTH RESIGN

[1](#)2. (C) Contrary to an Irrawaddy report that as many as 100 NLD youth members have quit the party, NLD member Ko Yarzar told us the number is only eight to ten. According to Ko Yarzar, himself an NLD youth member, those who quit submitted a letter of resignation at the NLD's Rangoon headquarters to protest long-standing disagreements with the party's Central Executive Committee (CEC). Another 30 youth members signed a letter urging the CEC to reconsider party Chairman Aung Shwe's plan to restructure the NLD youth by appointing members to oversee their activities (ref A).

[1](#)3. (C) NLD youth member Nay Chi Win told the media the youth members resigned because NLD leadership would not permit them to participate in decision making. "The chairman does not care about our viewpoints" Nay Chi Win told the Irrawaddy. He added, however, that his colleagues remained willing to work with the NLD so long as their views were respected. Ko Yarzar told us that divisions between the NLD youth and the CEC - particularly Aung Shwe - have existed for some time (ref A) and commented he expected additional members would resign or be expelled as a result.

14. (SBU) On October 12, Arakan League for Democracy (ALD) Joint Secretary and 1990 MP-elect Aye Thar Aung told the Democratic Voice of Burma that his party rejected the legitimacy of the regime's constitution and would not participate in the 2010 parliamentary elections. Speaking on the occasion of the ALD's 20th anniversary, Aye Thar Aung criticized the constitution as "not based on democracy" and said it "will not recognize the rights of ethnic nationalities in Burma." As a result, he declared that the ALD "won't accept it and won't take part in the elections." Aye Thar Aung predicted that sooner or later the regime would have to negotiate with ethnic leaders.

15. (C) This is the first time Aye Thar Aung has publicly announced the ALD's intention to boycott the elections in 2010. On October 17, Aye Thar Aung told us he decided to criticize openly the regime's "roadmap to democracy" and publicize the ALD's boycott to counter growing regime propaganda urging people to participate in the elections. His announcement represents a shift from the ALD's previously cautious approach to the "roadmap." In March, Aye Thar Aung privately told us the ALD supported a boycott of the May 2008 constitutional referendum, but was reluctant at the time to publicly say so (ref B). More recently, Aye Thar Aung informed us that the NLD and Committee Representing People's Parliament (CRPP) - an organization of 1990 MPs-elect including both ALD and NLD members - had decided to boycott the 2010 elections, but had no plans to publicize their

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decision.

COMMENT

16. (C) We expected some NLD youth members might resign or be forced out as a result of their long-standing feud with Aung Shwe. Given ongoing disagreements within the party, we will watch closely to see if the youths' resignation was a one-off event or the beginning of broader divisions in the party. In the meantime, while the ALD's decision to boycott the election was not a surprise, Aye Thar Aung's public announcement and repudiation of the constitution and election at this early stage was unexpected. Given the regime's warnings to the NLD and others to refrain from criticizing the "roadmap," the announcement is both risky and bold.

VAJDA